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ABSTRACT

The summary reporting service of the College Board Admissions Testing Program permits groups of colleges to obtain group reports for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) candidates from the most recent high school class who requested that their scores be reported to at least one college in the group (i.e. public four-year, private four-year, Catholic four-year, etc.). Similarly, high school group reports based on all SAT candidates from the given class attending high schools within specified groups (i.e. small city, suburban, large city, etc.) are produced. All school and college groups for which reports were produced both in 1971-72 and 1975-76 are included. The great majority of these groups exhibited declines in mean SAT scores over this period. With only a few exceptions, those groups showing increases in either SAT--verbal or SAT--mathematical mean scores had substantially smaller numbers of students in the more recent year. (Author/EVH)

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Trends in Mean SAT Scores for Students from the High School Classes of 1971-72 and 1975-76 Belonging to Selected School and College Groups

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Prepared for the Advisory Panel on
the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline,
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The summary reporting service of the College Board Admissions Testing Program permits groups of colleges to obtain group reports for Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) candidates from the most recent high school class who requested that their scores be reported to at least one college in the group. Similarly, high school group reports are produced based on all SAT candidates from the given class attending high schools within specified groups. These group reports supplement the individual college and school reports that are routinely produced. This paper summarizes trends in mean scores for all college and school groups for which group reports were produced in both 1971-72 and 1975-76.

Table 1 (for college groups) and Table 2 (for school groups) give the means and standard deviations of SAT scores for students in the 1971-72 and 1975-76 groups, differences in means over this period, and the ratios of numbers of students in more recent groups to numbers in corresponding groups for the earlier year. Actual numbers have been omitted in the interest of preserving the anonymity of those groups for which the number of students might provide a clue to group identity. The ratios are given as an aid in judging groups that have changed greatly in size and, perhaps consequently, in composition.

The two tables appear to require little discussion. Although there is a certain amount of variation, the results generally reinforce the finding of highly consistent declines during the early 1970s for nearly all subgroups studied.

Of the 34 college groups, one showed an increase in both SAT-V and SAT-M means, none showed an increase in SAT-V mean only, and two showed an increase in SAT-M mean only. Of 102 school groups, seven showed increases in means for both SAT-V and SAT-M, one showed an increase in SAT-V mean only, and 15 showed an increase in SAT-M mean only. With only a few exceptions, groups showing increases in mean SAT-V or SAT-M scores over this period had substantially smaller numbers of students in the more recent year.

In general, these data appear to be useful mainly in helping to demonstrate the pervasiveness of SAT score declines--particularly on the verbal test--over the last five years. No attempt has been made here to differentiate those groups showing increases from the remaining groups (except to note a tendency for groups with mean score increases to have declining numbers of students). A separate research project directed by Gary Echternacht has been examining the characteristics of individual schools with stable or increasing score trends. In contrast, this effort is concerned only with describing the score experience of those groups of schools and colleges formed for summary report purposes.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for SAT Candidates from the High School Classes of 1971-72 and 1975-76 Having Score Reports Sent to Colleges in Selected Groups

			Class of 1971-72				Class of 1975-76				1972 to 1976 Mean Diff.		
			SAT-V		SAT-M		SAT-V		SAT-M				
Region	Group Description		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	SAT-V	SAT-M	N(76)/N(72)
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	399	105	423	108	400	101	433	109	-1	-10	0.71
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	427	98	447	98	398	96	427	102	29	20	0.92
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	482	97	515	99	456	94	503	104	26	12	1.09
Northeast/East	Private Four Year	University Group	553	113	593	112	536	111	592	112	17	1	1.16
Northeast/East	Private Four Year	College Group	545	111	544	106	529	106	533	104	16	11	1.02
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	University Group	488	98	524	97	452	96	504	105	36	20	0.97
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	University Group	413	92	454	100	403	89	454	102	10	0	1.01
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	University Group	523	109	563	107	494	104	554	107	29	9	0.94
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	442	93	466	95	416	93	448	99	26	18	0.91
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	467	98	499	103	440	94	483	104	27	16	0.91
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	446	95	470	95	417	92	450	101	29	20	0.80
Northeast/East	Private Four Year	College Group	575	109	609	107	554	110	602	109	21	7	1.19
Northeast/East	Private Four Year	College Group	570	111	565	106	554	111	559	106	16	6	1.07
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	427	88	461	90	407	87	453	98	20	8	0.83
Northeast/East	Catholic Four Year	College Group	505	109	525	105	485	107	518	110	20	7	1.21
Northeast/East	Private Four Year	College Group	517	114	520	107	505	112	513	107	12	7	0.80
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	University Group	479	112	509	114	453	108	496	117	26	13	0.99
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	College Group	431	88	458	90	410	87	445	96	21	13	0.75
Northeast/East	Public Two Year	College Group	402	86	425	91	386	86	417	95	16	8	0.93
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	University Group	480	102	516	104	455	103	499	110	25	17	0.91
Northeast/East	Public Two Year	College Group	426	101	460	106	407	96	449	109	19	11	0.71
Northeast/East	Public Four Year	University Group	476	97	509	110	453	95	496	104	21	11	0.96
Southeast	Public Four Year	University Group	421	111	453	120	417	112	461	125	4	-8	0.90
Southeast	Public Four Year	University	459	107	493	111	436	105	480	115	23	13	1.27
Southeast	Public Four Year	College/ University Group	475	116	508	117	463	114	505	122	12	3	1.06
Southeast	Public Four Year	College Group	418	104	452	108	401	105	441	112	17	11	1.04
Midwest	Private Four Year	College Group	537	109	555	107	513	108	546	111	24	9	0.63
Midwest	Private Four Year	College Group	540	109	558	110	523	108	555	112	17	3	0.65
Midwest	Public Four Year	University Group	457	104	495	111	451	104	502	115	6	-7	0.67
West/Southwest	Public Four Year	College/ University Group	453	107	483	112	422	105	465	114	31	18	1.04
West/Southwest	Public Four Year	University Group	500	113	534	117	472	112	523	117	28	11	1.11
West/Southwest	Public Four Year	College Group	448	107	483	111	434	107	477	114	14	6	0.91
West/Southwest	Private Four Year	College Group	476	116	509	120	462	115	505	123	14	4	0.92
West/Southwest	Public Two Year	College Group	415	104	445	107	394	101	431	106	21	14	1.79

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for SAT Candidates from the High School Classes of 1971-72 and 1975-76 Attending High Schools in Selected Groups

Region	Type	Location	Class of 1971-72 SAT-V M	Class of 1971-72 SAT-V SD	Class of 1971-72 SAT-M M	Class of 1971-72 SAT-M SD	Class of 1975-76 SAT-V M	Class of 1975-76 SAT-V SD	Class of 1975-76 SAT-M M	Class of 1975-76 SAT-M SD	1972 to 1976 Mean Diff. SAT-V	1972 to 1976 Mean Diff. SAT-M	N(76)/N(72)
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	468	105	489	113	449	104	477	119	19	12	1.03
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	482	119	497	122	454	113	484	126	28	13	1.10
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	453	97	475	98	416	92	454	103	37	21	1.05
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	481	106	519	111	459	107	512	121	22	7	1.03
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	457	104	496	112	431	101	480	116	26	16	1.11
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	435	104	473	108	420	91	473	120	15	0	0.77
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	457	107	496	113	451	104	488	121	6	8	1.16
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	465	118	490	122	453	122	487	126	12	3	0.83
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	427	109	450	113	403	107	434	117	24	16	0.79
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	449	104	495	110	428	96	477	117	21	18	1.09
Northeast/East	Public	Large City	430	114	469	120	407	113	451	125	23	18	0.74
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	440	96	474	106	429	96	474	111	11	0	1.05
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	424	91	460	102	412	92	449	104	12	11	0.92
Northeast/East	Public	Large City	417	113	443	122	399	118	427	127	18	16	0.82
Northeast/East	Public	Middle Size City	371	110	398	115	350	107	387	111	21	11	0.80
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	393	91	415	99	376	97	397	103	17	18	0.70
Northeast/East	Public	Small City	425	102	466	109	414	104	457	110	11	9	0.79
Northeast/East	Public	Large City	354	100	375	100	332	102	352	99	22	23	0.75
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	499	110	562	117	473	106	533	115	26	29	1.24
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	492	113	519	115	463	112	504	120	29	15	1.08
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	460	109	490	113	437	105	480	117	23	10	1.12
Northeast/East	Public	Large City	392	113	423	124	350	108	384	116	42	39	0.94
Northeast/East	Public	Suburbs	429	111	458	114	416	112	452	120	13	6	0.88
Northeast/East	Public	Large City	423	118	459	126	390	132	426	129	33	33	0.89
Northeast/East	Public	Large City	330	88	348	84	300	79	329	78	30	19	0.98
Northeast/East	Catholic	Large City	473	103	486	102	435	101	458	111	38	28	0.90
Northeast/East	Catholic	Large City	449	103	456	103	427	101	452	108	22	4	0.93
Southeast	Public	Large City	368	110	396	112	332	103	359	102	36	37	0.74
Southeast	Public	Large City	457	121	484	128	458	124	480	126	-1	4	0.47
Southeast	Public	Large City	483	115	509	119	472	111	496	117	11	13	0.70
Southeast	Public	Large City	409	111	439	116	381	116	403	117	28	36	0.74
Southeast	Public	Middle Size City	484	108	521	111	480	109	518	115	4	3	0.99
Southeast	Public	Middle Size City	432	107	458	107	410	105	439	110	22	19	0.81
Midwest	Catholic	Large City	468	105	493	111	448	104	482	113	20	11	0.64
Midwest	Public	Suburbs	477	105	519	115	460	103	516	114	17	3	1.04
Midwest	Public	Suburbs	486	111	523	117	465	106	517	122	21	6	0.95

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Region	Type	Location	Class of 1971-72 SAT-V M	Class of 1971-72 SAT-V SD	Class of 1971-72 SAT-M M	Class of 1971-72 SAT-M SD	Class of 1975-76 SAT-V M	Class of 1975-76 SAT-V SD	Class of 1975-76 SAT-M M	Class of 1975-76 SAT-M SD	1972 to 1976 Mean Diff. SAT-V	1972 to 1976 Mean Diff. SAT-M	N(76)/N(72)
Midwest	Public	Suburbs	492	103	519	112	481	104	545	104	11	-26	0.55
Midwest	Public	Small City	471	96	519	109	462	96	526	113	9	-7	0.65
Midwest	Public	Small City	498	94	550	108	472	97	535	109	26	15	0.84
Midwest	Public	Suburbs	489	103	523	112	468	101	528	117	21	-5	0.81
Midwest	Public	Suburbs	495	102	536	115	484	98	545	116	11	-9	0.63
Midwest	Public	Suburbs	487	113	511	120	473	105	503	122	14	8	1.03
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	436	98	456	107	407	98	445	113	29	11	0.81
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	457	100	495	111	429	108	477	121	28	18	0.98
Midwest	Catholic	Middle Size City	461	99	490	105	446	98	482	104	15	8	0.85
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	363	100	393	106	332	94	366	94	31	27	1.07
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	427	99	461	108	402	97	452	114	25	9	0.87
Midwest	Public	Large City	415	112	435	114	380	111	408	115	35	27	0.50
Midwest	Catholic	Large City	448	101	475	107	393	112	440	126	55	35	0.61
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	446	103	474	111	421	102	459	115	25	15	0.86
Midwest	Catholic	Small City	506	100	522	105	484	104	505	107	22	17	0.71
Midwest	Public	Large City	506	106	536	114	510	114	554	117	-4	-18	0.56
Midwest	Public	Large City	436	124	464	127	440	118	477	126	-4	-13	0.78
Midwest	Public	Large City	393	110	423	112	393	112	440	126	0	-17	0.52
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	439	112	470	118	426	131	473	137	13	-3	0.53
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	434	125	473	133	432	120	471	128	2	2	0.57
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	420	112	458	119	435	108	488	121	-15	-30	0.32
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	475	105	500	117	476	103	520	117	-1	-20	1.04
Midwest	Public	Small City	496	100	531	104	497	101	573	99	-1	-42	0.80
Midwest	Catholic	State	475	102	504	103	455	98	481	98	20	23	0.74
Midwest	Public	Small City	522	96	560	105	479	107	533	115	43	27	0.76
Midwest	Catholic	Large City	498	101	524	105	478	104	517	113	20	7	0.54
Midwest	Public	Large City	454	117	497	128	449	110	516	125	5	-19	0.62
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	479	102	528	118	466	108	535	115	13	-7	0.82
Midwest	Public	Middle Size City	492	102	541	110	472	102	549	110	20	-8	0.63
Midwest	Public	Small City	420	105	446	103	395	103	426	106	25	20	1.00
West/Southwest	Public	Large City	486	105	514	116	465	113	506	117	21	8	0.56
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	451	106	488	104	437	106	465	111	14	23	1.27
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	461	101	519	105	443	99	498	106	18	21	1.05
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	465	115	494	118	457	109	482	115	8	12	0.94
West/Southwest	Public	Large City	471	105	509	108	456	110	507	111	15	2	1.28
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	418	107	445	113	390	109	421	119	28	24	0.62
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	427	110	464	115	399	112	441	116	28	23	0.88

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Region	Type	Location	Class of 1971-72 SAT-V M	SAT-V SD	SAT-M M	SAT-M SD	Class of 1975-76 SAT-V M	SAT-V SD	SAT-M M	SAT-M SD	1972 to 1976 Mean Diff. SAT-V	SAT-M	N(76)/N(72)
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	456	112	480	114	430	106	477	112	26	3	0.83
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	457	103	474	103	444	106	495	104	13	-21	0.91
West/Southwest	Public	Large City	438	110	462	112	412	110	430	114	26	32	0.87
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	495	107	526	104	454	110	507	118	41	19	0.90
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	462	102	507	110	445	91	505	98	17	2	0.91
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	417	105	444	109	416	102	456	115	1	-12	1.19
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	486	102	516	110	459	102	507	113	27	9	1.05
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	462	98	487	106	432	95	469	106	30	18	1.33
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	469	100	501	102	442	97	486	113	27	15	0.75
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	438	106	468	112	430	109	473	113	8	-5	0.75
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	455	104	488	113	449	113	498	117	6	-10	0.63
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	448	96	485	107	452	102	496	112	-4	-11	0.66
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	461	102	501	103	445	98	493	102	16	8	1.08
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	402	104	444	105	378	112	427	123	24	17	0.80
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	470	101	502	105	457	102	503	109	13	-1	1.19
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	336	87	362	86	297	74	344	80	39	18	1.44
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	486	101	517	104	457	101	497	111	29	20	1.26
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	473	104	510	111	442	99	482	111	31	28	1.68
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	467	100	510	109	444	106	495	110	23	15	0.88
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	439	121	466	118	449	122	477	122	-10	-11	0.46
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	465	108	490	111	456	106	495	118	9	-5	0.74
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	498	107	530	112	486	104	528	112	12	2	0.86
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	486	108	512	113	473	106	506	121	13	6	0.49
West/Southwest	Public	Large City	444	109	472	113	413	114	444	116	31	28	0.85
West/Southwest	Public	Large City	414	110	456	116	369	106	416	108	45	40	0.99
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	499	105	515	111	489	105	506	120	10	9	0.78
West/Southwest	Public	Large City	431	114	457	115	410	113	438	112	21	19	0.82
West/Southwest	Public	Middle Size City	415	109	441	108	391	107	427	112	24	14	0.90
West/Southwest	Public	Small City	409	103	436	110	391	105	413	104	18	23	0.96